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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Philippine Election Irregularities

The list below categorizes voting irregularities reported during the election and anomalies observed in the vote counting process.

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Although the list includes only a fraction of the available evidence, in our judgment it is sufficient to establish that procedural irregularities engineered by the ruling party reversed an election victory by Corazon Aquino.

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Evidence of voter disenfranchisement is widespread and irrefutable. Our analysis suggests it may be the most dramatic of the ruling party's tactics in securing President Marcos's victory over Corazon Aquino.

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the ruling party decided to disenfranchise as many probable Aquino supporters as possible in urban areas, where their preelection assessment indicated she had strong support. Voting is compulsory in the Philippines, and ruling party observers expected the turnout to exceed that of the 1984 National Assembly election, when 90 percent of eligible voters actually cast ballots. The Election Commission's estimate of the total turnout a week ago, however--about 21 million of 26 million registered voters--suggests that up to 4 million voters were disenfranchised nationwide--one million in Manila alone.

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- In Makati, the third-largest voting district in Manila, disenfranchisement included switching voting lists in middle-class neighborhoods on the eve of the election, disenfranchising one-third to one-half of the registered voters.

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- US Embassy observers reported that the ruling party canceled the election in two Aquino strongholds in Nueva Vizcaya Province after staging alleged Communist insurgent raids. 25X1
- In Pampanga Province, nearly 15 percent of registered voters were reassigned to other districts without their knowledge, preventing them from casting their ballots. In San Fernando City, for example, first time voters--an estimated 12,000--were excluded from registration lists.
- In Camarines Sur Province, some 10-15 percent of registered voters could not find their names on voting lists.
- In Bamban, Tarlac Province--an Aquino stronghold--voter lists were switched on the eve of the election, and an estimated one-third of the voters--most of whom are Aquino supporters--were disenfranchised.
- The US Embassy has also reported evidence of disenfranchisement in Bulacan, Maguindanao, and Laguna provinces, and Cotabato, Ozamis, and General Santos cities.

Other methods of cheating are more difficult to quantify and pass judgment on. Unlike disenfranchisement, for example, the purchase of votes is a time-honored tradition in Philippine politics. Although it undoubtedly contributed to Marcos's winning margin, it did not exceed the level observed in past elections.

- According to the US Embassy, President Marcos approved a vote-buying plan in early January. Ministry of Local Government officials throughout the country received \$100 dollars each with instructions to use the money to buy 10-15 votes for Marcos.
- US Embassy observers in Cavite Province reported that local government officials were engaged in vote-buying prior to the election.
- Observers also reported widespread vote-buying during the election in Iloilo, Zamboanga del Norte, Pampanga, Maguindanao, and South Cotabato provinces. Votes were reportedly "purchased" with both cash and government-supplied rice.

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Direct manipulation of voter returns appeared to be orchestrated [REDACTED]

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-- US Embassy observers report that in some towns in Maguindanao Province, the total number of votes was four times the actual population. In eight of one city's precincts only 20-30 votes had been cast one hour before the polls closed, yet the final tabulation revealed several hundred votes for Marcos.

-- In Cebu City--the country's third largest--vote switching was common. A ruling party official and member of the provincial election board was caught trying to switch a fraudulent tally sheet for the authentic one.

-- US Embassy observers reported that in Banko, Mountain Province, ballot boxes were opened, Aquino ballots were destroyed, and the totals changed. As a result, Marcos easily defeated Aquino in the area.

-- In Dumalinao, Zamboanga del Sur Province, Marcos won with more votes than there were registered voters.

Violence and intimidation--long hallmarks of Philippine elections--had an effect on the outcome that is difficult to quantify.

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- Armed men in the hire of the local ruling party kingpin in Region 1 (northwest Luzon) forcibly ejected opposition representatives from polling places, destroyed ballots, and altered tally sheets to favor Marcos.
- Armed men affiliated with the ruling party fired their weapons in a voting district in Manila to prevent NAMFREL poll watchers from observing the vote and tally at the precinct level.
- On 6 February a helicopter carrying a senior NAMFREL official was forced down by two unidentified helicopters in Isabela Province, northern Luzon--a stronghold of President Marcos. According to the US Embassy, the governor of Isabela has been successful at neutralizing NAMFREL by employing widespread intimidation tactics throughout the province.
- According to the US Embassy, government officials in Region 2 (northeast Luzon)--a Marcos stronghold--canceled the election in areas where Aquino was expected to do well and blamed it on false reports of raids by Communist insurgents.
- In the province of Iloilo, where Aquino was expected to do well, a ruling party kingpin hired 40 heavily armed members of the "Lost Command"--a violent group of mercenaries who protect the properties of close Marcos associates on Mindanao--to intimidate voters. According to the US Embassy, Aquino received no votes in several of these precincts.
- NAMFREL observers were barred from monitoring much of rural Cebu Province after local KBL kingpin Ramon Durano threatened them with violence. NAMFREL considered the voting invalid in these areas.
- According to the US Embassy, ruling party supporters intimidated and harassed voters in Region 1 to such an extent that as many as 150,000 votes cast for Marcos in the region are open to question.

Ballot box stuffing, the switching of false election returns for authentic ones, and the use of "flying voters"--where groups of unregistered supporters cast ballots in multiple precincts--were also used.

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- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Employees of the Eastern Shipping Line--owned by Roberto Benedicto, a close associate of President Marcos--complained that supervisors had threatened to fire them if they did not help fill in fake ballots for President Marcos. 25X1
 - According to the US Embassy, 10 ballot boxes accounting for about 3,000 votes were snatched in Region 6 (Negros) from precincts affiliated with the opposition. Although the government is blaming the incident on Communist insurgents, precincts affiliated with the ruling party were not disturbed.
 - After NAMFREL watchers were forced to leave precincts in a district in the Manila area, large groups of pro-Marcos "flying voters" descended on the district.
 - Ruling party supporters stole ballot boxes from at least 9 precincts in a district in Manila that was expected to vote heavily for Aquino and dumped the returns into a gutter. Similar activities took place in Region 5 (Bicol) where at least 1,000 ballots from a single province were stolen by ruling party supporters.

Most of the military's efforts on Marcos's behalf appear to have taken place behind-the-scenes or before the ballot--a departure from the traditional use of the military to deliver the vote through violence and intimidation. [REDACTED]

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- [REDACTED]
- A senior government official--who believes that the military should have done more to maintain peace and order at the polling places--says they instead held back and allowed private armies to engage in intimidation tactics against voters. He also confirmed that Armed Forces of the Philippines personnel participated in filling out blank ballots on behalf of President Marcos and says that the Air Force used its planes to deliver these ballots to the provinces.

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- NAMFREL observers were prevented from monitoring military personnel as they cast their ballots on a major air base in Manila. 25X1

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- The government tally shows few returns in Region 2. The US Embassy says they are being held back in case they are needed to seal Marcos's victory--

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- the commander of Villamor Air Base in Manila invalidated the votes in an enlisted housing area because the personnel and their families had voted for Mrs. Aquino.

- In violation of the election code, one of the computers supporting the government's tally is located at a major military installation in the Manila area. NAMFREL and foreign observers were denied access to its operation.

Although the opposition also engaged in election tampering, the slim resources available to Aquino supporters prevented them from conducting the kind of widespread and systematic fraud conducted by the ruling party.

- In Tagig City, Cavite Province, Aquino supporters distributed prepared Aquino ballots to voters at the polling place and physically prevented pro-ruling-party voters from voting. 25X1

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- In Ozamis City, Misamis Occidental Province, NAMFREL workers opened ballot boxes and disrupted voting in several precincts.

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